

**Tristan Jepson Memorial Lecture**  
**“Towards Managing Mental Wellness in the Legal Profession”**

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Thank you all very much for being here tonight. This is a very special occasion. It's a huge honour for me to be here. Thank you, George and Marie, for making this evening possible.

It is a real privilege for me to address this issue about wellness in our professions. There is a big myth in all professions. According to the myth, because we are bright people, and we know what we should be doing to be healthy, we are actually doing it. In reality, just because we know what we should be doing does not mean we do it. Much of this is not rocket science. If you were talking about staying well to somebody that was close to you and whom you cared about, you would know what to tell them and you would probably say a lot of what I'm going to tell you. The big challenge that we face is what I call the brain-heart gap: the fact that we know this in our brains and we can look and sound and talk as if we know all the right things to say, but are not actually able to give ourselves the permission to do some of those things that are good for us.

Is the mental health of lawyers a problem? Yes, it is. We've spent the last few days talking about it. I have been speaking with your local experts here on what their experience is, and you know – it's not that different from what I see in my medical colleagues on a daily basis. Let me give you some specific facts. These facts are from an American study done in Boston, but they have been replicated in other studies in other locations as well. In this study, lawyers ranked first in depression out of a hundred and five professions surveyed. All the people in the survey are all highly functioning, and achieved an amazingly high potential, and out of these hundred and five professions, lawyers are number one. While most professions want to be number one, and we work hard to be at the top, this is not the list you want to be at the top of! Most lawyers have three times the risk of depression than the general population. 25 per cent of lawyers are known to suffer from elevated feelings of psychological distress. This includes anxiety, depression, a sense of insecurity, and a sense of questioning themselves and doubting themselves. Interestingly, in 1984, a study showed that fourteen per cent of male lawyers who were practising at that time, and 20 per cent of female lawyers who were practicing at that time, were feeling a sense of dissatisfaction at work. In six short years, by 1990, those figures had doubled. Something is happening with the practice of law, and the sense of stress perceived by lawyers is certainly increasing. We see a disproportionate number of lawyers committing suicide, much higher than you would expect compared to the general population. In fact, one study says that 11 per cent of lawyers contemplate suicide on a monthly basis. 15 per cent of lawyers meet the criteria of alcoholism. Substance abuse is a major factor in up to 80 per cent of complaints and other processes against your legal profession. And in fact, some groups of lawyers feel that the legal profession isn't doing enough, is doing practically nothing to address this. It is just so gratifying to see this large audience here today, a group dedicated to addressing this issue of wellness in the legal profession.

Here is some more specific Australian data. I read an article today in the paper, the Law Cover, in which the insurer spoke about an unexpectedly high number of lawyers with depression, stress, alcohol and gambling dependencies, which is very similar to the American studies. It reported on a survey of the health of seven thousand professionals, and similar to the other studies I referred to, lawyers came out as the second unhappiest of all professions. (You've slipped a little!) The patent attorneys are the first on this list. Now, in Canada, patent attorneys are connected to lawyers, so you can collectively still retain top position. The *Australian Financial Review* conducted a survey, showing that forty-five per cent of young lawyers are thinking about quitting their job in two years. One per cent are planning to quit law altogether. These are serious concerns in the profession, where I understand that we don't have enough lawyers, and we are under-serviced, and over-worked, similar to medicine. You can't afford to lose any lawyers. You can't afford to lose these young minds that are necessary to the future of your profession. How can we understand this, and address the issues, so we can stem this flow?

In psychiatry, we gain an understanding of a situation by formulating it from a bio-psychosocial approach. Let's do the same to help us understand issues of wellness in the legal profession.

There are some biological factors at play that predispose one to stress. There are the lifestyle factors, including long hours, and heavy workload, which can often lead to poor sleep, poor eating habits, and lack of regular exercise.

We also see some other biological factors. It's well known that if you have a strong family history of psychiatric illness it greatly increases the likelihood that you, too, are going to have difficulty coping under stress. It makes you more vulnerable to having similar psychiatric difficulties. We see drugs and alcohol and the biological impact of that, which I spoke about earlier. We are not sure that professions - whether it is in medicine or law - actually abuse drugs and alcohol any more than the average population does in terms of actual numbers. What we see, however, is that if this the type of behaviour we use to manage our stress, the type of illness we have is much more serious. We have higher than average incomes so can support this much more. As professionals, we may have access to more serious drugs and medications. As well, we see a lot of difficulties such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders, and bipolar illness, all of which is part of how we understand the biological aspects of what's causing this problem.

What about the psychological aspects that add to this situation? For the last seventeen years in my private psychiatric practice, I have treated primarily physician colleagues. By observing these highly functioning professionals, I have been able to distill some common characteristics that they all share. Personally I share them too... with everyone in this room. There is a type of personality that is more likely to become a professional. What is this type?

Here are some of the traits: We are very conscientious; we want to do the very best we can. We pay attention to every little detail. If there is something more that can be done, we will try our best to do it. We want to please people. A lot of time and effort goes towards that extra step, to ensure that everybody you possibly can please is going to be pleased.

We have a huge sense of responsibility. We take responsibility unconsciously and regularly. Sometimes, responsibility is assigned to us, for example in the workplace; but often we'll just step into a situation and assume this responsibility. Since we are capable and competent, no one complains, and instead it is assumed that we want to do this. This occurs not just in the work place, but in our day-to-day life as well. And sometimes, even when we know it is not necessarily our responsibility, we feel quite guilty when we do not do it. That guilt propels us further to maintain this behaviour.

We're unrelentingly perfect. We come close, as close as mortals can, to being perfect. We are functioning at a very high level, but then take on the pressure to maintain this. Students that are admitted into law school are in the top one per cent of students. This, unfortunately, sets up and reinforces the perception, and sometimes the misperception, that we can be almost perfect and that we have to be this all the time. It's what I call the "Curse of the Gifted" - that the more one can do, the more that is expected of us, by others and by ourselves. Having achieved a certain level, that now becomes the standard, and now one has to surpass this. Since there is constantly a little bit more that we can do, this part is reinforced and is how we drive ourselves.

We like to be in control, and we like to control other people and situations around us.

In the end, such behaviour is great in the work that we do all day, but there are times when we do not have to be like this. As I go through this list of characteristics, it becomes evident that the very things that are compatible with success at work are some of the very things that cause conflict in our personal relationships. For example, I can go to work in my office, and I can tell my patients everything I think they should do and what is best for them and, for the most part, they listen, and often even think about doing it. The fact is that I can actually give them some of that information, only because they allow me to do so, and give me that control. When I finish my day in the office, and I walk through the front door of my house, my family have not given me the same level of control, and they are not about to let me tell them what to do! You have to know when you need to exhibit these characteristics, and when it is fine to let our guard down and relax, and not be like this.

Another truth that we all share is one that always comes as a surprise – that we doubt ourselves and feel like a fraud. As professionals, we are very respected, highly competent, and are the cornerstones of our profession, yet we all share this common sense of self-doubt. And I'm sure that if you were honest you'd recognise it too – that sense that you have just barely managed to fool them all. All you have to do is just keep your head down, and not mess up too much, and then no one is going to find out how little you know. Yet, you're waiting for that one thing to happen, where it's game over, you're going to be found out, your cover's blown. Many of us walk around with this feeling. This insecurity is part of why we do continue to strive do our best, and to be so conscientious and responsible, and to go that extra mile, to somehow "make up for this".

I said earlier we like to please people. However, the paradox sometimes is that when we do please people, we don't really know how to accept it. We are not very good at saying how well we did, or accepting compliments. Very few of us do that. It's easier to say, "it was just luck",

or “anyone could have done the same thing”, or “I just happened to be in the right place at the right time”. By dismissing this, unfortunately it continues that cycle of trying even harder to get more approval.

And finally, because we're so busy focusing on doing all that, it is very easy for us to put off the very things we need to do to take care of ourselves. We are very good, in fact we're masters, at delaying our own gratification. We will put things off forever, and make do. Initially, it was so we could take that time to study, to make those great marks to get into law school. Now we're in law school, we've got to stay here, we've got to do our best; we've got to make good marks and impress all those people. And then, of course, we've got to get into the firm that we want and article there, and then once we're in, we've got to impress them and get on that track to partnership. Throughout that whole process, we keep putting off things that are good for us. We'll get to them sometime, as soon as we have some time to do that. “Yeah, yeah, I know I should do that, and you know, I will as soon as I get a chance”. But we end up delaying these things. And keep in mind, we are not only delaying it for ourselves, but we're making these choices for our family as well. They are also negatively impacted by the choices that we are making to put things off for ourselves.

We are aware that these traits are positive and inherent. As you go through the list you will probably recognize many of these aspects of yourself. “Yeah, check, check, check, yeah, that's me, right, all of it, right”. And that's okay. My goal is not to say “quit being like that”. This is exactly the reason that you are successful in your careers. What you have to know however, is that you don't have to be like that every minute of the day. And we need to challenge ourselves to look at when we need to be like this, and when we do not. These personality traits are all very socially and professionally valuable, but personally very expensive.

Why are we like this, and where this has come from? I am going to give you, in a few short minutes, an understanding of how we, such highly functioning people, have developed these sorts of behaviours. This comes from our sense of who we are, this sense of self which is developed at a very early stage in our life. Around the time that we are six, seven, eight, nine, ten years of age is when we are trying to figure out who we are. We look at different people in our life, especially our parents who are the most important people in our lives at that time, and we look at how they treat us, how they treat other people, and how other people's parents treat them. We just unconsciously put all of this together, and come up with some conclusions. It is not a reflection of what's actually happened; rather it is really a reflection of our perception of what happened. So, there we are at an early stage in our life when we are thinking in a concrete manner, not yet achieving abstract thinking; and making the most important conclusion of our life.

Children at this stage think things like

1. Our parents are perfect, they know everything, they are right all the time. We haven't quite come to that adolescent, “my parents know nothing”, phase yet.
2. My parents must think I'm great, and be proud of me and brag about me to everybody all the time.
3. And finally, children at this stage are very self-centred and they feel they are the centre of the world. An excellent illustration of this is a situation that occurred years ago, which one of my

children related to me recently. I have three sons, and my older one was just 14 months old when the twins were born. These three boys are fairly close together and often doing the same thing at the same time. Some days, it was hard to keep track of who was doing what. One of the twins was telling the story of how I had once become upset at him unfairly for something his twin brother had done. I was refusing to listen to any explanations and sent him up to his room. So he's really upset. He stomps every step of the way up to his room, and stomps on his bedroom floor, and then jumps up on his bed where he jumps and stomps some more. As he is jumping, he looks out his window and he sees a car coming which suddenly stops. He tries it again, and he sees another car come and he jumps a bit more and he makes that car stop. He confessed that for many years he'd go up to his room, jump on his bed, and see how many cars he could make stop. When he was eight years old, he actually saw the stop sign outside his window!

That's the concrete thinking stage that we are in when we are coming up with one of the biggest decisions in our lives – concluding who we are, and how we appear to the world. So if we have had any experience at all that actually makes us wonder how proud these people are of us, we assume that it is because of us. Remember, it's not really what actually happened that counts, it's our perception of that. As a group of professionals, we have all experienced the feeling that our parents were not that proud of us. How could this occur?

Sadly, some of us do come from families where there has been emotional, verbal or physical abuse of some sort. That makes such a conclusion understandable. Sometimes it's not what happened, it's what didn't happen. We may have had parents who were physically or emotionally unavailable to give us the feedback that we wanted. Yet, if I look at my own family, it wasn't even any of those things. I come from an immigrant family in Canada, and we were motivated and encouraged to do our best because our family wanted us to succeed. I'm sure many people in the room here can relate to coming home with a 98%, and somebody asking what happened to the other two marks! If you are a young child needing a lot of positive feedback, you conclude “I guess that's not enough to make them happy”. Remember, they are supposed to be proud of us, but they are always right because they know everything, and so if they are not pleased with us it is our fault. Unconsciously, we come to the conclusion that somehow we don't measure up. Then, we unconsciously and unknowingly spend the rest of lives supporting this assumption. We find a few things that we're not perfect at and we say, “See, I didn't really measure up”. We twist, edit, select, and distort situations to make them fit this foregone conclusion. And finally, when somebody gives us some good feedback, and says something nice about us, it doesn't fit our hypothesis, so we dismiss it. This is part of how we think, and so we take this conclusion into most situations we experience. My 90:10 Rule is based on this. This Rule is to remind us that at in any situation we are in which makes us upset, 90 per cent of the reaction has nothing to do with that specific situation, but is in fact the old history, this old conclusion. We take it into every situation. For example, you are in a meeting and you propose something, and everyone is not entirely happy with it, and you're crushed. But you're crushed because you actually walked into that room expecting to be inadequate and be crushed, and most of your reaction is to all the other times you have felt the same way. Thus, when you are feeling stressed, a tenth of your reaction is all you need to cope more productively and constructively in that specific situation.

As bright people, we use high level intellectual defences. Defences are mental mechanisms that protect us from recognising some of our painful feelings and experiencing some of our difficult emotions. Such defences include denial – “I’m fine, I don’t have a problem, I’m not stressed”. When it becomes hard to deny, we can minimize – “Well, okay, maybe I am a little stressed, it’s not so bad. I have felt worse, and I am still functioning”. Or sometimes we rationalise it, “Maybe I am a little more irritable, I’m not coping as well. But I just need to get away and have a holiday.”

These are all just like mental gymnastics, little mind games that we play to protect ourselves from having to realise or even address or reflect on the fact that maybe we’re not coping very well. And the brighter we are, the easier it is for us to intellectualise. Another defence mechanism that we use to manage stress is to just work harder. A lot of my colleagues tell me they hate going on holidays because then they have to stop and actually think. It is much easier to stay at work and just keep going, and do things that are hard but safe. Watch out for this, because work as a defence works really well. It works because we like our work, so we can do a little bit more of it, and it’s really not a hardship. There is always more work to be done, so we can get away with it. And in fact, it is very socially acceptable – people think you’re a better lawyer and that you are working much harder, and in our society and in our profession, such behaviour is supported and reinforced.

In addition to the biological and psychological factors, there are lots of social demands, both in the work place and in the home, that add to the sense of feeling stressed. At the end of a busy day at work, we come home to more responsibilities that we have to deal with there. There are people in our life that need something from us. And at the very end of the day, maybe if we have a little bit of time, we might actually be able to attend to some of our own needs. In all of this, our own personal needs are last, and sometimes they’re lost; we don’t even get to them at all!

It does not matter whether the stress comes from a biological, a psychological or a social factor or some combination of these. It all just comes down to one thing - that in that situation, you feel like you have no control, you have no choice, you’re trapped, you’re backed up against the wall. That lack of control is the number one feeling that causes stress. Yet, if this perception causes the stress, the number one solution to dealing with your stress is to challenge that perception. How do we do that?

Bright people look at things in a very logical way. If I am in a stressful situation, often I know I am only responsible for one or two per cent of the problem. All around me is the rest of the situation, the 98% that’s really causing the problem. Logically, it makes sense to focus on the bulk of the problem. We look at this 98 per cent around us, and consider how we can make that change. What we forget however, is that control is an illusion. We have no control over anything or anyone outside of us. So, here we are focusing on the ninety-eight per cent around us, of which I’ve just said we have zero control. It’s no surprise – we feel like we have no control. What we have forgotten is that one or two per cent that is ours, that we put into that situation. That’s the part we bring in – our strengths, our weaknesses, our hopes, our expectations, our perceptions and our own expectations of yourself, our concerns about what

other people are expecting from us, our ability to delay gratification. All of that is in our little two per cent. It's not much, but of that two per cent, we have a hundred per cent control.

Sometimes we can manage our stress well. We can intellectualise things to help us cope. Yet, this is not always enough. It becomes harder and harder to manage. Here are some early warning signs that let you know that you are not really coping quite so well.

1. You start to get more physical problems and illnesses. Instead of that one cold you get every year, this year perhaps you had three or four, and it's harder to recover. After three weeks, the cough still persists. If you are prone to migraines from time to time, now suddenly they're happening more often, and the medication you use is not really holding them any more
2. There are more problems with relationships. You might find that you're not enjoying the relationships you've had, either at home or at work. People say you're harder to get along with. They say you're more irritable, you're a little more edgy. You are not your usual easygoing self.
3. There is a greater sense of negativity. You feel more negative overall, about things you used to enjoy doing, and people you used to enjoy knowing.
4. There is a significant increase in bad habits. I want you to think about what your bad habit is, because it could be a really good early warning sign. I know when I first had the twins, people would ask me how my day was, and a good day was a two Oreo day. (Sorry, what is it – Tim Tams, right. See, I'm learning.) So a good day was a two Tim Tam day, a bad day would be a twelve Tim Tam day. And I know for me that's my little early warning sign. When I open up the cupboard and start looking for cookies, it's obviously not the cookies I need, it's a break or some time for myself I am really looking for. Sometimes it is what we do, like eat too much or have that extra drink or spend a bit extra money (retail therapy helps a lot sometimes), or a little bit of gambling. These are all behaviours that should be a trigger. Sometimes it's not what we do, but it's what we stop doing that was good for us, like meeting friends or exercising regularly.
5. And finally, Exhaustion, which is actually quite a late sign. This is like Mother Nature sitting on your chest and telling you that you just can't get up and do this one more day.

These early warning signs are important to look out for. They are actually precursors to Burnout. Burnout is chronic over-stress, often due to work-related stressors. There are three stages of burnout. The first one is emotional exhaustion. This is where you are just exhausted emotionally. You get through the day. This point is very important, because if you are looking to see how someone is producing and reacting and performing at work, to see what their level of stress is, you are not going to get a very good correlation. I am amazed at how ill, how depressed some of my colleagues can be, but they are functioning just fine at work. However, by the end of the day, you're emotionally exhausted. You have nothing left to give. Somebody looks at you sideways, wanting one thing else from you, and you blow up. There are no reserves. It becomes so hard to connect with other people, and deal with any other possible demands. We then move into the second phase, which is Depersonalisation. Here, we just actually start to pull away from people, and disconnect because it is easier. We see this at work, when colleagues stop coming to meetings or having lunch in the staff room or attending functions after work. It becomes easier to grab a sandwich at their desk, come late into a meeting to avoid the social part at the beginning, and probably leave a little bit early again, so

to just avoid people. At home, you don't really want to talk to people. We come home and put up the newspaper in front of our face, a clear sign – “don't talk to me for a while”. I have a patient in my practice who tells me she literally crawls slowly up her stairs so she can get to her bedroom for fifteen or twenty minutes of peace and quiet before anybody realises she's home. You do whatever you need to do to just pull away and get a little bit of time for yourself. The last stage is one of a reduced sense of personal accomplishment. You don't really remember what it was about this profession that you liked. There is a huge sense of dissatisfaction, and many professionals at this stage start to think about leaving the profession entirely. Now, it's not a bad thing to review what you're doing at work about every seven years or so, and see if there is any adjustment you can make, and tweak things somewhat so you continue to enjoy it. But this last stage of burnout is not a positive proactive thing. This is negative, a purely reactive process. It is not the right time to make a major life decision about your career.

Burnout itself is not a psychiatric problem, but it can lead to serious psychiatric problems. It can lead to problems including professional problems in terms of complaints or in terms of losing your job or losing your privileges. It can lead to serious difficulty with major relationships, such as a marital separation or divorce, or being asked to leave the work place. We see the anxiety, depression, addictions, and suicide that I spoke about. This is a process, and it's continuous.

There are two key points to be made. Firstly, if you could understand that a colleague has one of those illnesses or is predisposed to some of the things that I've talked to you about, you can help them identify those early signs, and you can help them adapt and remain healthy. This is very compatible with success. With help and understanding, these colleagues can continue to have a very successful career. Secondly, it's not just about helping those people who have pre-existing difficulties. Even the very healthiest and the most highly functioning professionals, put into an unhealthy environment, can become unhealthy. So this isn't just something that happens to somebody else. None of us are immune to this. This can happen to any single person in this room.

Let's now focus on our 2%, and identify some techniques on how to manage your own stress. The concept of work-life balance is of increasing concern within professions. How can we best achieve such a balance? I used to think it was easy to get my life in balance. All I had to do was look at all the things I was doing, identify the things I really enjoyed doing and keep those, and recognize the things which I really didn't like to do and let go of those. But I soon learned that this is just the first step. Achieving balance is a two-step dance. The second step is the hard one, the one where we all falter. It involves choosing, out of all the things you like to do, only some to do. That means choosing to not do some things you like to do. That's the challenge for all highly functioning people. There are just too many things we like to do, too many things that people want us to do, too many things that we're good at. Keeping your life in balance means letting go of some of those. You cannot do everything you want to at the same time; it's impossible.

The concept of Phases helps me when I have to make those choices. When I recognize that there are different phases in my life, and when I make a choice at one phase to give up

something, it is not forever and there may be another phase in my life when I can pick that up again. A good example of this is a choice I made as I graduated and went into practice with a very young family. As much as I enjoyed teaching, at that phase in my life I had to give that up and focus on the clinical practise which allowed more regular hours. I consoled myself with the knowledge that I could start to teach again at a later date, that I was not giving it up permanently. Of course, when I took it up again, I would then have to choose to give up something else. At different phases, we make different choices. Balance is a dynamic process; there is no one right balance that you can achieve and maintain for the rest of your life. A choice works for as long as it does, and then it is time to re-examine the choices. You have to go back through that two-step process, and now look again at what you have on your plate, what do you like that you want to keep, and the decide out of all the things you want to keep which ones you actually can maintain.

Another concept to help in balancing your life is the story of the Five Balls. This is an old fable, which I think works for all of us. It describes how we are constantly juggling five balls at any one time. There is the work ball, the home and family ball, the relationships ball, the friends ball, and the self-care ball. The work ball is the rubber ball - if you drop that one, it will bounce right back again. And some people say it's like India rubber – when you drop it, it will bounce up even higher. The other balls are a lot more fragile; when you drop them, they might crack a bit, they might scratch, they may even shatter entirely. If you have to drop one of those balls, do it in a responsible way; but consider the work one as being the most resilient, the one least likely to be impacted by that change. You have likely heard of the rocking chair test of priorities - nobody sitting in their rocking chair when they're ninety ever wished they had spent more time at the office. Let's focus on each of these balls.

The work ball causes a lot of stress, primarily because there is a mismatch. If you are in charge of people in your work place, you will want to think about how your work place rates in terms of these mismatches. There are mismatches in work load. If there is more work to be done than there are people to do it, it will lead to a stressful work place. Others areas of mismatch are in terms of the sense of control and choice that people have in that work place, in terms of the sense of being rewarded and recognised and acknowledged, the sense of community and connection, the sense of fairness and respect for the work that you do, and also the presence of conflicting values. If you're in a work place where what you're being asked to do conflicts with what your values are, your level of stress is much higher. As key people in your work place, you will want to consider each of those factors and ensure better matches.

A transition between your work and home life is essential. People often forget about transition time. Yet, you cannot finish your day at work, wade straight home, and get right into what is happening there. The best advice is to stop before you start. As you are leaving work, mentally put yourself into what is waiting ahead at home. And once you get there, then you can much more easily move into this. I remember this being brought home to me years ago when I had finished a long day at the office and come home. I'm bending down to take off my boots, and these three little bodies come racing around the corner, throw themselves at me, and I fall back, and my head hits the wall behind me, and I'm upset. Then I stop to think. "There's something wrong with this picture when I'm upset because my three kids are rushing to give me a hug that I'm finally home." I had not anticipated this, nor appreciated how important

planning for the transition would be. At the end of your work day, just take a few minutes in the office to think about what you are going home to, to allow you to make that switch. Also, it may be helpful to make the transition the other way when you're leaving home to look at what's ahead for you in the office. Doing this in a conscious way allows you to make the change much more smoothly, and prepare ahead. When you get home, don't forget to say hello to people that you live with.

At home, create a rule that says you can't take your work home with you. Now, you're all going to laugh at me because everyone in this room has taken their work home. Yet, if you don't even have this as a rule, you won't know that you're breaking it every single day. Remember we talked about who it is that comes into this profession, the top one per cent, which means that 99 per cent of the nation does not function like you do. This is not the norm! If you do need to take work home, talk to your partner about that, and let them know you need a few hours to work and ask what they were planning and when it could work out best. Remember, you're not in full control any more: you need to ask. And once you negotiate time to work, start when you were going to start, and stop when you said you were going to stop..

Let's talk about the home ball now. You're looking at managing the housework, and the children. Remember that when you are at home, your family deserves your full attention. It is not enough to just be there. You are not with your family if you are physically in the room and talking on a cell phone. You are not with your children if you're watching their soccer game and have thumbing your Blackberry. .

Children at different stages need different things, and have different expectations of you. And ultimately the biggest gift that you can give your children is time where they are the centre of your attention and you are available to them. It is said that children's problems get bigger as they do. While some talk about how difficult adolescence can be, it can be one of the most pleasurable tasks of your life. Adolescents are young, they're independent, they've got lots of witty things to say. They can be really fun for you to be with. They need your time, and need you to listen to them. One of the best things you can do is to drive them places for their activities. It's great because they are stuck in the car, we have to spend time together, they have to talk to me but they don't have to look at me. They do not feel that I'm staring at them and they're getting the third degree; it's actually an easier conversation. More comes out of those conversations with my children in the car than at any other time of the day

A tip I received that has helped me deal with my teenagers is to talk to them as if I would talk to a friend. If I'm driving in a car with a friend, I wouldn't be giving her the third degree and asking her direct questions and telling her what she should have done. It would just be a conversation. That's what I do with my adolescents. When I'm angry I'm not yelling and screaming at my friends; I shouldn't behave that way with the teenagers as well. They are starting to become real people with amazing thoughts and ideas, and deserve to be listened to and treated that way.

I'll talk a little bit about Elder Care as well. In the near future, elder care is actually going to become a bigger problem for all working professionals than child care currently is. The average adult spends about seventeen years of their life as a parent of a dependent child. Then

they go on and spend another eighteen years of their life as a child of a dependent parent. If you know of colleagues in this same situation, reach out and share stories, so you can get and give support.

There is little I can tell you about relationships in a couple of minutes. If you're single or you're married, and you want to be, life is great. The problems, of course, come when you're single or you're married and you really don't want to be. Marriage is a lot of work and requires time together. Sadly, the average working couple spends an average of twelve minutes a day in private conversation. Think about how many minutes you have, and think about how many you're actually giving each other. Time crunch is the biggest problem in most relationships, especially in two-professional couples. The number one reason that marriages run into trouble is because people stop being friends, and they stop having the time and making the effort that you would make for a friend. Changes in relationships are normal, but you don't really just want to settle for less. Marriage or any committed relationship is hard work all the time. If all you want is a warm feeling all over and a flutter in your heart, drink coffee. It's a lot easier than the amount of time and effort that this relationship is going to require!

Think about the children's game, Dot-To-Dot. In this, children have to draw a line from the number one to two, and from two to three, and three to four, and so on. These are small, short little lines, and when you draw them you actually come up with a whole picture. Think about that in terms of your relationship. Obviously you can't spend every single minute of your time together, but you can have a lot of little dots of connection in your day. So you wake up and you connect with a kiss; that's your first dot, that's one. And you've got to make sure that this point of connection to the second one is so close you can draw a straight line to that. And then the third point, and then the fourth point, and the fifth point of contact will all be separate and short, but close. Keep this as a constant thing. What you'll end up with is as you connect the dots is a picture of a full relationship. Think about what these dots are and how you can make that happen.

Friends are really important. As wonderful as our committed relationships can be, they are not going to meet all our needs. That's where friends come in. Friends make the difference between a lonely life and a lively life. When you think about some of your friends, you have an instantly smiling face, you're happy. Some of your best, happiest times are with friends. And often they are a lifeline when there is a huge amount of stress in your life, when things change such as during a separation, getting chemotherapy, or when you're having a job transition. These are the times when our friends really help. They are there to support us, to nurture us, to listen to us. Interestingly, friends also protect our bodies. Many studies have talked about how people are healthier when they have friends and when they have a good support network. It is crucial to make and maintain these social connections.

And finally we get to the self-care ball. I am doing what we all do, which is leaving this until the very end. We're almost running out of time so we're going to rush through this, as usual.. Let me give you a few specific strategies to take care of yourself.

Above all, take care of yourself first. We are so busy, there are so many people we have to attend to, so many responsibilities that we have to take care of. We have to ensure we are going to be able to do this for the long haul.

As I was flying here on Air Canada, the airline attendant stands up at the front of the plane to give us the safety demonstration. She tells you how to put your seat belt on in case you haven't been in a car since 1960. She tells you where the life jacket is, as she points under the seat. She tells you where the exits are- at the front, and over the wings, and in the back. Then, she tells you that if the oxygen pressure in the cabin changes, these masks are going to drop down., You must pull slightly to release the flow of oxygen, put the mask on, and breathe normally. She also tells you if you're travelling with someone else that needs your assistance, you should secure your own mask before you help them. This is because you're no good to anyone if you pass out. You need to see taking care of yourself as exactly the same thing, especially in the middle of your stressful day. Use this as a metaphor- that in the midst of a tough day, imagine you are in a room with the oxygen masks dropping down, and you have to stop and do the equivalent of taking care of yourself first. This may mean quickly grabbing a sandwich when you are hungry even if there are many patients waiting to be seen. We're not talking about huge investments of time, but we're talking about realising that we need to take care of yourself so that you're going to be available for all those people that you feel a sense of commitment to.

It is important to make sure that we do all those things that we know are good for us- to make time to exercise, focus on proper nutrition, ensure that you get enough sleep. Here is another good analogy - choosing the big rocks. Imagine I have a big clear bowl here; and some big rocks and some little rocks, and some sand and some water. I am trying to see how I can fit it all in. If you put the sand in first, it's going to be really hard to put any of the rocks in because you've run out of room. But interestingly, if you take those big rocks and put them in that container first, and then you add in the little rocks they sort of fit in around the big rocks. Is it full yet? Well, you could add some sand, and that would fit in around there too. Then, throw in some water. Yeah, that will fit in too. The point is that if the big rocks are in place first, you actually have some space for all the other rocks; but you can't put the big rocks in at the end. Define in your life what your big rocks, your priorities, are. That's what you want to do for yourself. What do you want to do for the people in your life that are important to you? What do you want to do that's important at work? And this is not what's urgent, but is most important. Once you define what those are and make sure you commit time for that, then all the other things fall into place.

Make sure that you take holidays. I am shocked at how many professionals do not take the holidays that they're entitled to, or that they're encouraged to take. Plan and book your weekends, your long weekend, the weeks away, and your big holidays. Then use what I call the Tarzan Rule to maintain this. As Tarzan is swinging through the jungle, he doesn't let go of the first vine until he has got the next one firmly in his hand. Similarly, do not end a holiday without booking one more. Do this for all the really important things in life, and all the things that you really enjoy in life. You're having lunch with a great friend; don't end it until you've booked the next one. You are playing golf with one of your best friends – excellent, but do not end that game and let that person go without knowing when you're going to do it again. Use this Tarzan Rule for all those things that you keep meaning to do, and to keep them happening.

Think also, about unplanned breaks, times like you're stuck in a traffic jam, or you're in the wrong line at the grocery store. You can either fret and fume and get yourself all worked up about that, or you can think about this as a Gift of Time. Here is time you didn't expect to have. You can relax; you can listen to music that you like in your car and really allow yourself to enjoy that gift. Look for these Gifts and enjoy them.

Think about creating and sustaining support systems. Have at least one friend who is good for you. And remember that those "S" words go together. Silence and Shame - when you remain silent about something, it can lead to a sense of shame. Share and Support - When you share something that's happening to you, you actually get support at the very time you need it. Friends are great. Look for mentors among your colleagues, who can also be good resources for that. If they're not available, pets are great. Pets don't care if you're having a bad hair day; all they want is that you know how to operate a can opener. It's a very small condition for all the positive unconditional support that you're going to get.

I really encourage you to find a relaxation technique, and use it regularly. It doesn't matter what it is, I can guarantee a hundred per cent result, with one proviso – you have to practice it. What do I mean by that? Well, let's imagine you're playing in a concert. You go to rehearsals, and practice at home over and over so that you get it right. The day that you're on stage during the performance, you can just glide into it effortlessly. The day that you're feeling stressed – that's the performance. It's too late then to start rehearsing and practising. So pick a relaxation technique, and practice it regularly every day. Then, when you need it, it's going to be right there to guide you effortlessly.

A couple of more points before I finish. Money is the number two reason why professionals do not make the changes they need to to better manage their stress. Sometimes decreasing your stress means you have to work a little less. That obviously is reflected in the income that you're going to earn. Remember you want to be around to enjoy the income that you earn, and that means that you have to be physically fit, and you have to actually have time to enjoy that. Many professionals have made commitments to financial things that then gets them into that cycle of continuing to work hard to maintain them. If you need it, get some financial help and plan so that you know that you've created enough time to enjoy it with the people that you're working so hard to get these things for.

Finally, the number one reason why most professionals cannot make the changes they need to become well and to better manage their stress is Guilt. We feel too guilty. Our sense of responsibility is large. We push ourselves, we have to keep going, we have to do all of these things, and we can only do things for ourselves after that. Here is a Rule about guilt. If there is something you're thinking of doing for yourself that you know is going to make you feel better, but feel guilty about, that's the very thing you should do. Chances are pretty high that what you want to do is absolutely fine – if it were something unethical or unreasonable or immoral or unprofessional, you would have censored that thought a long time ago. If it's actually drifted up to the surface as a conscious thought, acknowledge the guilt and let it go; and go ahead and do it, enjoy it.

At the end of this, people often say, “Well, all that sounds great, but how am I actually going to make this happen?” The answer is “Don't just try”. I want to illustrate it with a little exercise. I would like to ask everybody in this room to please stand up. Great. Thank you. Now, having asked you to do that, I'd like you to sit back down. And this time, instead of asking you to stand up, I just want you to *try* to stand up. Look around at your colleagues, your very capable colleagues, all of whom immediately stood up a second ago, and look at how ineffective they are at standing up when all they're doing is trying to stand up. The point I want to illustrate is that there is a huge difference between making a firm commitment to doing something to better manage your stress, and just saying you're going to try. If you leave here today saying you will try, this is how unsuccessful you're going to be - as successful as you were at standing up the second time.

I would like you to pick one, two, three of these suggestions that I've thrown out at you today and make a determined commitment that you are going to do this, even if it's just one small change. I want to remind you of all the wonderful reasons that you chose to study law, all the things about it that bring you that satisfaction, that excitement, that glow, that sense of “I love this and I really want to keep doing this”. You can keep doing that, and it's absolutely worth the effort and the time that it's going to take to do just a few of the things that I have shared with you, so you can sustain that feeling and enjoy this for the rest of your careers.

I thank you very much for your time and interest today. Every small change each of you makes will magnify to ensure the health of your profession. Thank you.

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